

NEW YORK Illustrated Globe A POPULAR PAPER

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Vol. III.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 29, 1873.

TERMS IN ADVANCE: (One copy, four months, \$1.00;
One copy, one year, \$3.00;
Two copies, one year, \$5.00.)

No. 155.

MARGARET'S PROMISE.

BY ERIN E. REPROD.

"What shall I bring you, Margaret?
A bunch of roses red,
Or lilies for your snowy breast,
Or violets instead?"
"Oh, bring me what you like," she said,
"and I will be content;"
I saw her rosy cheeks grow red,
Although her heart was bent.
"Well, I have brought it, Margaret,"
I whispered, tenderly;
"You promised you would be content,
And left the choice to me."
"I will not break my word," she said;
"What is it you have brought?"
A heart that loves you, Margaret,
And many a tender thought.
"And you must take it, Margaret;
And make your promise good;
Say, will you, dear, or will you not?" drooled
You know you said you would."
"Well, if I must, I must!" she sang,
As gaily as a bird;
"Not, sir, because I want your heart,
But just to keep my word!"

The Beautiful Forger:

THE ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG GIRL.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLETT,
AUTHOR OF "MADELINE'S MARRIAGE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A DISCOVERY.

After the American conquest of California, some of the descendants of the Spanish-Californians still held large landed estates. The social condition of the country was utterly unsettled about 1848, and Mexican and savage outlaws worked their will among the more civilized settlers, almost without fear of law.

There was a small settlement, or *rancheria*, at this early day on King's river, near the point where its seven or eight tributaries unite again in a calm, broad stream—not far from what is now a port of entry and naval station, at the confluence of the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers, some fifty miles above San Francisco. Two or three miles from this hamlet, a rudely constructed but commodious house stood on ground overlooking a plain covered with water during part of the year. This house was noted as the residence of an eccentric though benevolent man, who had lived there but a short time. Dr. Merle had the fame of a skillful physician, and of some little repute among the ignorant common people who often profited by his medical advice, always bestowed gratuitously, believed that his chemical experiments aimed at the detection of coveries in occult science. It was rumored that he possessed secrets of nature unknown to mankind in general; and his strictly secluded habits, his love of study, and devotion to scientific research, had fostered this popular belief. Thus his humble home, shared only by his young daughter and an elderly housekeeper, with a surgical student who performed the duties of an assistant, became a spot marked by superstition among the farmers and herdsmen for miles around.

The red and gold of sunset had long since faded, and the snow-peaks of the Sierra Nevada, and the dark, distant moun- tains were undistinguishable from the heavy gray mist. Within the house was light enough to show a square room lined by shelves full of books and various utensils used in chemical experiments. A round oaken table in the center, on which stood the lamp, was littered with crucibles, small flasks, a pair of scales, and other paraphernalia of a lover of natural philosophy, who found his favorite occupation in making analyses, and concocting various useful compounds.

Dr. Merle was a man considerably past middle age with a thick, grizzled beard and masses of gray hair, dark complexion, and deep-set eyes. He wore an under-shirt with a blue and yellow shirt outside, a neckerchief, long trousers, and long boots. His outer shirt was fastened with a blue sash over a belt in which a sheathed knife was secured. His form was tall and majestic, though not robust; his countenance frank and expressive; his whole appearance both dignified and prepossessing.

He was reading and noting passages from a volume on the table. Suddenly he looked up, listening; then rose and walked to the window. The October wind blew fiercely, bowing the heads of the trees in front of the gate. Through the fitful gusts he could distinctly hear another sound: that of a horse's hoofs, approaching nearer.

Dr. Merle opened the room door, stepped out into the passage, and then opened the front door, which was fastened by a bolt. A gust of wind blew back the hair from his forehead, as, peering out, he saw a horseman stop and dismount at the gate.

A visitor so late was strange in his dwelling; for though the humble settlers had often availed themselves of his medical skill, he had rarely been called forth to visit them except during the day. They realized that Dr. Merle was no ordinary practitioner; but one who craved solitude and leisure. An alchemist, intent on discovering powerful elixirs, or the transmuting metal whose touch could not be resisted.

Make the black iron start forth brilliant gold," could not be mindful of the convenience or the small wants of simple rustics, when their importunity might interfere with the success of his pursuits.

The traveler fastened his horse carelessly at the gate, and entered the inclosure with a light and buoyant step. Even before the doctor could see his face, he was aware that it was a young man. Stepping back, he threw the door wide open, and invited his visitor into the study.

The stranger followed, as bidden, and took the seat offered, removing his cap as he did so. He pushed the chair back from the lamp, but there was light enough to see that his features were delicate and his complexion smooth; the fairer from the contrast of a thin, black, silken mustache. His cloak, which he retained, was of dark serge bordered with black fur; a black silk scarf was tied around his neck, and he wore thick leather gloves. He looked around the room furtively, as if uneasy; yet his manner had a rather unusual swagger; it was as if he was striving to conceal apprehension by an affectation of boldness.



"Aha, Madame!" he exclaimed. "It is as I half suspected. You are masquerading in disguise!"

Dr. Merle took from a shelf a black bottle containing wine, poured some into a battered silver cup, and offered it to his visitor. "You have ridden far," he said, "and ought to take some refreshment." The stranger started, but declined the wine. "How do you know I have ridden far?" he asked, after a moment's hesitation. "Your horse bears the marks of long and rapid riding," returned the doctor, "and you are heated with the exercise. You had better take something." Again the hospitality was declined, with thanks. "You have not been very long in this place?" at length the young man asked. "A little more than a year. I came up from the South. But you probably know all about me." "I have heard that you lived for years in Mexico, and that you are noted for your skill in medical science." "I do not know about that. I left Mexico years ago." He paused, aware that the young stranger was intently studying his face. Then he returned the gaze; for his curiosity was piqued by the voice and manner of the youth, so much superior to those he was in the habit of seeing. The stranger evidently shrank from particular observation. "You may think it strange," he said, not without embarrassment, "that I should come to you, at such an hour of the evening, unprovided with an introduction. But I wish to consult you confidentially." "To consult me?" "Or rather, to ask your aid in the strictest confidence. I am convinced of your skill. May I speak to you, assured that your secrecy may be completely safe upon me?" "It is a part of my profession to be discreet, as well as skillful," replied the doctor. "But yours is not—I mean you are not an ordinary physician?" "I do not practice in general. But if I can be of service in any case of emergency, you may command me." "Thanks, I will trust you in every thing. My father has an aged servant who has for years suffered with an intensely-painful disease which is entirely incurable. So terrible are its ravages upon his system that only the more violent drugs have the least effect; and those are soon rendered powerless; so that he has no relief. I am sent for a medicine more potent than any he

has yet taken. It is composed of two or three ingredients; they are written here, with the proportions."

He took from his vest-pocket a folded paper, and handed it to Dr. Merle, who opened it and read what was written. He started as he did so in evident surprise; then folded up the paper and laid it on the table.

"Are you not a young man?" he said, "that the ingredients composing the medicine you wish to procure make it one of the most active poisons known?" he asked, fixing his eyes on the stranger's face.

"I was not—that is—I knew it must be something powerful; for nothing else does any good," the youth answered, without changing countenance.

"A poison—and one perfectly untraceable."

The doctor noted by his notice a sinister gleam in his visitor's eyes as he said this. He continued:

"It is strange your father should have sent you on such an errand."

"He had no one else on whom he could depend."

"True; it must have been so. It would not do to trust such a medicine in the hands of ignorant persons."

The doctor rose, walked to a cabinet in the corner of the study, unlocked it and took out two or three small crystal flasks. Out of each of these he poured successively a little into another, and from this filled with a pale violet-colored liquid a glass vial, which he corked tightly.

The stranger watched him eagerly. At the same time he drew from his breast-pocket a purse well filled with gold. As the doctor returned to his seat, he took out three coins and held them out as in exchange for the drug he expected to receive.

"Put back your money, sir," said the doctor, somewhat haughtily. "I do not take pay for medicines, till I know they work well."

"But this is sure to do so. Will you give it me?"

"Not till I receive a satisfactory declaration that it is to be administered for the saving of life and not for its destruction."

The young man bowed his head, but the doctor noticed that he grew very pale.

"You have not given me your father's name, and I have not asked it; for as you come from a distance, it is only I know him."

"Indeed you would not—"

"As you please," said Dr. Merle. "The oath must be administered properly, or not at all. I will have no irreverence. I begin to think you know nothing of the nature of a solemn test like that!"

"Fool!" muttered the young man in his teeth.

"As you please again. It is nothing to me whether you take this or leave it."

With suppressed rage, the young man began unfastening the glove on his right hand, drawing it off with evident reluctance.

"Let me help you," said the doctor, taking in his firm grasp the slender wrist of his visitor; and with a sudden pull, he had the glove removed.

The hand was delicate, small, and white as milk; two of the slender fingers wore rings of great value. The owner of the hand struggled to release it, but it was held fast, while the doctor peered at his knee, flashing eyes into the flushed face averted from him.

"Aha! Madame!" he exclaimed. "It is as I half suspected. You are masquerading in disguise!"

"Let me go, sir, this instant!"

"I must deal with you as the man you represent yourself. Let me relieve you of your cloak—so!"

In spite of the indignant struggles of his prisoner, Dr. Merle threw off the cloak, drew out the rapier, and quietly took off the false mustache. A velvet bodice, a short, tunic skirt, white silk hose and cavalier boots, formed the dress beneath the cloak; but the struggling hand loosened fine plaited black hair concealed under thick brown curls, and these fell over the slender, graceful neck, leaving no doubt of the sex of the visitor.

Her cheeks were crimson; her eyes blazed defiance and fury; she stamped her foot in a tempest of passion.

"You shall rue this violence, sir!" she exclaimed, endeavoring to repossess herself of her rapier.

"Softly, madame! all in good time! You shall be satisfied. I am so already."

"How dare you—"

"I was not afraid of you as a man; as a lady, I hardly fear your pardon," replied the doctor, bowing. "It would have been better to come to me in your own character, for then you would have been safe from harsh usage."

Muttering threats of vengeance, the disconcerted stranger, having secured her cloak and weapon, moved toward the door.

"Stay, madame; will you not take what you came for?"

The disguised woman turned back. "Can I have it?" she asked.

"On the same condition; the oath I required."

She stepped up to the table and took the book in her ungloved hand. Dr. Merle repeated the terms of the oath, to which she carelessly assented, and, at his bidding, lifted the volume to take it from her lips. Then she offered it to him to take it from her, and held out her hand for the vial, which she received in silence.

"I suppose it would be useless to ask why you have come to me?" the doctor said, steadfastly regarding her.

"Quite useless, sir. Your curiosity would be baffled. Good-evening."

She flung on the cap and cloak, and strode from the room as she spoke.

Dr. Merle came after her with the light, but before he could say enough to detain her, she had sprung upon her horse, and vanished in the darkness.

CHAPTER II.

A REVELATION.

As he returned into his study, Dr. Merle touched a small bell on the table. It was presently answered by a singular-looking being, the first sight of whom was startlingly repulsive, but more from the sinister expression of his face than any personal ugliness. He was apparently about twenty-eight years of age, uncommonly short of stature, but broad and robust. His full, compact, muscular frame gave promise of prodigious strength, and was not ungraceful, notwithstanding his want of the usual grace. His movements were quick and agile. His arms were sinewy, his hands red, but well shaped; his complexion was dark and red; his lips were thick, sensual, and dark red; his eyebrows and beard were heavy; the hair, black, straight, and luxuriant, hung in a mass over his ears and his broad forehead, within two inches of a pair of black, deep-set, flashing eyes, that gleamed at times from beneath the bushy brows with a leer of cunning mingled with ferocity. The eyes, hair, and chin showed the blood of a half-breed. Ulric Boyce was, in fact, the son of an Indian woman of high rank in her tribe, by a French surgeon, who had visited her country with a troop of European soldiers. He was born with a deformity from infancy, and had been well educated according to what was thought learning in that day. After his father's death, he returned to his mother's people, but did not remain with them. He had fallen in with Dr. Merle, who was in need of an assistant, and found Ulric's active habits and willingness to learn of valuable use. In this wild region, associates and domestics had to be chosen for other qualities than those which form the ground of attachment in social life. Ulric was anxious to perfect his knowledge of the science that had caused the savages to revere his father. Dr. Merle had been pleased with his energy, sagacity, promptness, industry, and the keen apprehension of the young man, who was willing to serve him for a moderate compensation, and who appeared to desire knowledge for its own sake. So Ulric had become a member of Dr. Merle's family.

"Not in bed yet, Ulric?" said the doctor.

"Not yet, sir," returned the assistant.

"I have had a visitor—you saw him?"

"I saw a young gentleman ride away just now," answered Ulric.

"Throw a saddle on my fastest horse, and follow him, but not so closely as to be avoided," said Dr. Merle. "Don't give the alarm to any one; I can trust you. That young man was a woman in disguise."

Ulric made no reply, but a look of intelligence answered for him.

"He came on a strange errand; she wanted medicine or a poison. I could see that she was mischievous, so I gave her a drug that can do no harm! It is as innocent as pure water."

"Who is she?"

"That is what I want to know. Of course she would not give me her name, nor tell me where she lived. But you can easily find out. She will ride leisurely, for she has far to go. She went toward the east. Go, mount and follow her."

"Shall I give her any message?"

"By no means. I only want to know where she lives, and what is her real name. She spoke of her father; he must be a wealthy man. I am convinced she has some evil purpose to accomplish, which it is the duty of a good citizen to frustrate. But I will not detain you. As soon as you have discovered her house or name, you can return to me."

The man bowed low, with a promise of strict obedience, and went out. In a few moments he was heard riding rapidly from the gate. He took the direction indicated, following the road, and the noise just then appeared above the horizon of the east.

Dr. Merle seated himself again at the table, and drew a folio volume toward him; but he could not fix his attention on its contents. At last he pushed the book aside, and threw himself back in his chair, absorbed in deep thought.

A door at another end of the apartment from that opening on the passage was softly unclosed. A light form glided in, and came noiselessly to the chair where the physician sat. He had started up in surprise at seeing his new visitor.

"Helen!" he exclaimed, in tone that almost savored of reproach.

"Dear father, don't be vexed with me for this intrusion! But I was so anxious about you!"

"Anxious?" he repeated.

"You always go to your room early, very soon after I do, and I waited to hear your steps on the stairs. I could not imagine what kept you up beyond the time. You are not angry with me for coming to see you, are you, father?"

And one white round arm was thrown fondly round Dr. Merle's shoulders, as the questioner bent forward to look in his face.

The girl was young and beautiful—of the delicate fair order, slender and lithe in form, with curling hair, golden brown, complexion like a pale rose, and features chiseled in classic mould. Her voice was low, sweet and caressing; her eyes were of a soft and tender blue, and their expression was loving and gentle.

She was the pearl of daughters, thought he whom she caressed, and his reproach of her vigils and her care melted into loving tenderness as he returned her expressions of affection.

"But you must retire now, my dear child," he said. "I can not let you risk your health by remaining a late watcher."

"Come you then too, dear father."

"Not yet. I have to wait for Ulric."

"For Ulric? And where is he?"

"I have sent him of an errand."

"He can come in by the kitchen door. The window next to that is always unfastened. Why should you wait for him?"

"I must hear what he has to say when he comes."

"Then, if you must wait, dear father, let me wait with you! Say not a word. I will not leave you alone." And the fair girl drew a low chair close to Merle's seat, and placed herself in it, leaning on him so that she could look up into his face.

He passed his hand caressingly over her waving hair.

"My darling—my own Helen!" he murmured, tenderly.

"I want to ask you something, dear papa! I have long wished for an opportunity."

"What is it, little one?"

"You have not been well for some time, I have seen it. You have lost appetite lately, and you often grow so pale when you are sitting quietly here. There is a great change, father, than last summer."

He made no reply.

"Am I not right, dear father?"

"I fear you are, my child."

"Then why—why do you not go to the great city and consult some eminent physician?"

"Because it would be of no use."

"Why not?"

"I know enough to be sure of it. I have studied my own symptoms. In disorders of the brain—"

"Father!" exclaimed the maiden, catching his arm, and looking at him with blanched face.

"Do not be alarmed, child. It is nothing sudden," said the doctor, again smoothing the golden hair. "But it is time you should know all; and I have had many warnings that my time may be short. I have long felt it my duty to talk to you. Helen, my love—There—do not sob."

The girl wept bitterly, pressing her face against his arm.

"Helen, you must be a brave girl, and help to keep up my courage. I may have need of you before long."

"Father, if you are ill, let us go to the seashore. You were so well, and we were so happy by the sea!"

"In Texas—you mean?"

"Oh, yes, papa; it was better than this—much better!"

"I suppose you to go from this place if I am worse. In any case, we shall not be here long."

The girl responded joyously.

"It is a glorious home for you, child, and I do not mean to stay in it."

"Oh, dearest papa, I am so glad!"

"There is something more, Helen, which I have long wished to say to you. It ought to have been said long ago."

"What is it, dear father?" urged the girl, clinging closer to him.

"You do not remember your first home, my child. That was in Paris."

"No, you were too young to recollect it."

"Let me tell you. It was a mere little pensioner in Paris; it was lost in the sea—gone for fifteen years since—when I was sent for to attend a lady in the Rue St. Honore. I found her far gone in consumption; she died within ten days. The nurse—Margaret was her nurse—"

"Margaret—our Margaret?" cried the girl, in surprise.

"Yes, dear, this same faithful creature who has been with me so long. And—Helen—I must tell you a secret I have too long kept from you. You are not my child."

"Father, is my child?" exclaimed Helen, starting from her seat.

"Only in love, dear one! Your mother—I believe that sick lady was your mother—commended you to my care—and I promised to keep you as my own until I found your real father. You were then about three years old."

"Not your daughter? Oh, papa!" cried the weeping girl hid her face on Merle's knee.

"Margaret had been engaged by the lady after she had been left alone and became ill—and Margaret never knew her husband. She only knew he had sailed for South America. The suffering mother bound me by a promise to try to find her child's surviving parent. She gave Margaret the same store of gold left with her. After her death, we crossed the ocean."

"Who is my father?" demanded the agitated girl.

"The lady's name was Madame St. Hilaire. Her husband was a South-American merchant. She was English; it is from her you have your blonde hair and complexion. Some cruel carlumy and evil counselors brought about separation between your father and mother, and he returned to his own country, leaving his wife in Paris, where she fell into a rapid decline. It is a sad story, dear child."

"Go on—" the girl faltered, her voice broken by sobs.

"I have little more to tell. In the years since, I have spared no pains to discover St. Hilaire. Leaving you in Texas, I traveled over the States, but could hear nothing. A rumor that a South-American merchant had settled in California brought us here. My inquiries have elicited nothing; and we may soon leave this country."

"To go whither?"

"To the States—to New York, or to Paris. It is the same to me. I have enough to live on in a comfortable way, and we have always been happy, have we not?"

"Oh, yes—but if you are not my father?"

"I love you as my own child; and I shall keep my promise to your dead mother to take care of you while life is mine. But my health

is uncertain, and I ought to prepare and forewarn you, my child. You may discover your father, yet—though my research has been in vain."

"Do you think I would leave you?"

"I hope not, I trust not. I pray that your hand may close my dying eyes. But you must be unprepared for any change. Your father must have been a wealthy man, and he would surely be proud of his daughter."

"I would not live with a man who was so cruel to my mother! I want none of his wealth. I would stay with you, even if he were found."

"So you will, if you wished, dear child. I know you love me!"

"Do I not, my own dear papa?" and the girl clasped her hands in both hers, and again hid her weeping face on his knee.

"Come, Helen, you have nothing to grieve for, and my mind is now easy. Stay; here is something you must have."

He rose, went to the cabinet, and having unlocked it, took out a small casket, which he opened. Taking a gold locket suspended on a fine gold chain of peculiar workmanship, he gave it to Helen, still seated in her low chair in a dejected attitude.

"Who lives here?" asked Boyce, in his soft, light voice, anxious to obtain all the information he could, under cover of his supposed youth.

"Paula. Have you never heard of him?"

"Never, sir!"

"There would be a stranger in these parts?"

"I have been here a very short time. Mr. Sloman! Is he from the East?"

"No; he came from Louisiana."

"Is the young gentleman his son, then?"

"Not exactly." The man laughed. "How inquisitive you are for a little shaver like you! Come on; you want something to eat, I'll be bound!"

He led the way into a spacious kitchen. It was low-ceiled and unglazed; but had its dark-smoked rafters hung with dried fruits. More than one pair of deer antlers projected from the walls, and they were loaded with antlers. A large iron stockade, which a dresser were covered with household utensils of copper and tin, none of which evinced good housekeeping in careful scouring. A barrel and tap in one corner looked like a plentiful supply of beer or cider. In a huge open chimney large logs were smoldering, and the shadows were partially dispelled by the ruddy glow of the coals. A heap of buffalo-skins in another corner was pleasantly suggestive of a good bed.

The man lighted a tallow candle, and set out on the table some meal and bread, with a mug of beer, a cold ham, "Fall to," he said, and Ulric waited no second invitation.

"Is that your manners, boy?" cried his entertainer, when he saw eagerly devouring the good cheer without removing his cap or cloak. As he spoke, he snatched the first from his head and flung it on the floor.

As Ulric started up, and tried to recover his head-gear, his cloak fell from his shoulders.

"Hello!" exclaimed the servant, stepping back in genuine surprise, then bursting into uproarious laughter. "It is not a boy, after all!"

Ulric's swarthy visage and masses of black hair made him appear older than he was in reality.

"A strolling beggar—singing for a living!" repeated the man.

"Why, you might make a fortune exhibiting your bushy phiz and your squat broad stern for an overgrown cub, and the stock-in-trade wouldn't run out!" He laughed coarsely, and pushed the viands toward his guest, who had resumed his seat.

"You're a small voice for such broad shoulders!" he said, while he showed the meat and bread to his own throat. "I am not so fat as you are!"

"Come supper! Well, it's late for a strutter, and you may turn in here."

He threw open the door of a small room, a sort of pantry, behind the kitchen chimney. There was a straw pellet with a buffalo-skin, and another for covering.

Ulric went in and threw himself on the rude couch. It was not long before he knew, by the snoring of his companion, that he was fast asleep on the skins in the kitchen corner.

He had now discovered all he had been promised to his master, and was planning to return to Dr. Merle. He could easily get out through the kitchen unquestioned and unheeded. The house was still; all were wrapped in slumber. He had only to steal out and climb over the stockade gate, if he could not get in.

But he had his own curiosity to gratify, and his own plans to accomplish. He thought of the doctor awaiting his return with a sneer, and muttered a contemptuous exclamation as he remembered that he would no doubt catch a reprimand for his disobedience.

Paula had been waiting to go to bed, and was about to do so when the maid entered.

"I am a student. I find him quick and obedient; trustworthy too, as far as I can see. He is rough and uncouth, but he has served me faithfully."

"He has been with us six months. I am afraid of him. Oh, papa, send him away!"

"Why? have you seen any thing in his conduct to make you suspicious, Helen?"

"Enough at times. He watches you so."

"He is always examining your books when you are not looking."

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The voice of the serving-woman was steady, and there was a pained expression in her face.

"Dangerous to possess? Puff!"

"Ay, but it is so, mistress."

"Yes," inserted the African, bluntly, "it is dangerous."

"But, why is it dangerous? Tell me that."

"It has always been fatal to the one holding it, my mistress; and I wondered, while I dared not protest, that your mother should wish you to find it and keep it."

"But, had my mother lived, she would have found it, and kept it?"

"True—she would," admitted Zetta; "but it is a fatal possession, my mistress, believe me. It has always brought trouble to its possessor."

"Death sometimes," supplemented Gaol.

For a third time, a trembling shiver crept over Zetta.

"Put it away. Let me keep it. I will hide it; and then, perhaps, Zuelo Nanez may be saved from its evil spells."

"Evil spells? You talk like a crazy woman! No; I will keep it. Spells? Ha! ha! I am not so superstitious. But, tell me—who is, or was, Carline Mandoro?"

After hesitating a moment, Zetta said:

"She was one of those who died because of possessing the jewel."

"So, Carline Mandoro, at one time, held this star of diamonds?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to say that it caused her death?"

"Yes."

"How did she die?—in a fit? Was she drowned?—poisoned?"

"She fell by the hand of an assassin, mistress—she was stabbed."

The interruption came tremulously, and Zetta made another attempt to thrust the star into the box.

Zuelo herself could not prevent the chilly sensation which passed over her at the announcement. But she said, presently:

"Tell me more of this Carline Mandoro."

"We know no more," came quickly from the African.

"That is a falsehood! You are hiding something from me. Come, speak out. You are both sworn, of your own free will, to be faithful to me, and do my bidding. I command you to tell me more about this star—its history. And tell me, too, who Carline was!"

At that juncture the fancy clock on the mantelpiece struck the half-hour after ten. Gaol pointed toward it, and looked at his young mistress, while he said:

"The time is sounding. See—Zuelo Nanez must not forget her duty. The Green Shadow."

Without a word, Zuelo arose and hurried from the room. But she carried the star of diamonds with her, despite the protestations of her serving-woman.

"It will be the death of Zuelo Nanez, as it was of others before her," Zetta said, slow and thoughtfully, and gazing toward the door through which her mistress had vanished.

"Yes, it is a cursed talisman of evil, wrought by the prompting of Satan," added Gaol, also looking in the direction of the door.

CHAPTER IV.

MET AND MATCHED.

As Cortez Mendoza uttered the words signifying that he had not come upon an idle mission, he eyed Helene Cercy keenly, with a look of confidence in his dark face and a grim smile wreathing the corners of the mouth beneath his long mustache.

"Cortez Mendoza, you are a brave man," she said, at length.

He bowed.

"Do you know what danger you are in?"

"Danger?" he repeated, elevating his brows, and molding his lips to a circle.

"Yes, danger. Your life is threatened."

"Malediction! No?"

"Ay, but you shall see, if you disregard what I say."

"And what is that?"

"Begone, instantly."

"Ho! Begone, eh?"

"Go, sir, before you feel my claws—

"The claws of a cat!"

"No matter. Go, now."

"Bau!" he growled, shifting his position, "I am here on business—not to run away again. I am no fool."

"Beware! There was a strange light burning in the dark orbs that were fastened on him."

"Beware! Of what?"

"Of me, Cortez Mendoza."

"Of you! Huh! I do not fear you—nor anything."

"Nothing?"

"Malediction! Nothing."

"Not even the ghost of Carline Mando-

ro!"

"Caramba!" he shouted, half starting up.

"Aha! you fear nothing. I see—I—not even the ghost of Carline Mandoro. Ha! ha!" and she laughed, mockingly, leveling a forefinger at him.

The Spaniard clenched his teeth and glared fiercely upon her.

"Leave off!" he hissed.

"I shall not. You fear the ghost of Carline Mandoro—it is plain; and why should you not? Ha! ha—a! But, mark: you shall fear me far more than you fear the spirit of the dead. Do you hear? Begone, now!"

"No—malediction!" he snarled, striking his knee with his fist, "I will not go!" striking the other knee with the other fist "until I make you understand that I do not fear ghost nor human!"

Then, beating on both knees, with both fists, after the manner of a pair of drumsticks, while he leaned slightly forward, and spoke, with inconceivable rapidity:

"I am—Cortez Mendoza! I fear nobody, nor anything. I am here for your answer—malediction!—after fifteen years. You have not escaped me. You had best not try to do so again. You thought me dead. But, I am alive—caramba! yes, I am alive! I want your answer. Be quick! Malediction! I am Cortez Mendoza!"

"Beware, Cortez Mendoza!—beware! I came rustling peculiarly from the tongue's end of the beauty."

"I will not! Your answer, Madame Helene Cercy—your decision, between three things, in my favor: first, your hand in marriage."

"Preposterous!"

"Or half your fortune—"

"Never!"

"Then, the Star of Diamonds! Ha! Where is the Star of Diamonds? Can you tell me that, Madame Helene Cercy?"

"I can not. The Star was stolen from me fifteen years ago. But, ere this, the

one who was the thief has died. The star has always proven fatal to the possessor, if there was any truth in the story you told me over fifteen years ago."

"Not so!" he said, quickly.

"I know of one who had that star during nearly all the last fifteen years. And he is alive! Malediction!"

"Then you know where the star is to be found?"

"No matter. I know that you speak the truth, when you say that you have not got it. Next: your fortune?"

"You shall have none of it!" defiantly.

"Ho! it is you who are brave now"—smiling in his grim, ironical way; "you are defying Cortez Mendoza. Do you not fear Cortez Mendoza? It is my turn, now, to say 'beware'! Beware how you trifile with Cortez Mendoza! I know how to deal with you, I think; though I was deceived in you fifteen years ago."

"Take care!—take care!" panted Helene, while her jeweled fingers worked nervously, and she seemed about to spring upon him.

"Take care! yourself!" he retorted.

"The Star of Diamonds is lost. You will not give me half your fortune. So. Now then, the last alternative: your hand in marriage."

"I would as soon wed a viper!"

"Then there would be two serpents in the nest! Malediction! You are a scratcher. But, you are a beautiful woman; you have money; you must be the wife of Cortez Mendoza!"

"No!" she cried, "but I may escape you. Take this! and with the words, she snatched a dagger from her bosom, and sprung forward with the blade gleaming aloft—her face glowing, and the large, dark eyes alight with the emotions of hate.

But, with lightning quickness, the Spaniard drew a revolver from his pocket, and leveled it at the heart of the angry woman.

She halted before the muzzle, and her features paled, for she saw that the weapon was cocked and ready, and only a slight pressure of the finger was necessary to deprive her of life.

"Halt, there!" he snapped, sharply. "You would kill me, eh? Come one step more, and I shall fire! See—I am prepared! I have a pistol!—Malediction! I have two pistols! Keep off, now," and from another pocket he produced another pistol, "covering" her completely, while he settled back in his chair, with a broad, triumphant grin.

Grinding her white teeth together, Helene Cercy shrank before the frowning deadly tubes, and restored the gleaming dagger to its concealment in her bosom. But she did not drop her gaze, and the blood remounted to her cheeks, in a fresh anger at her defeat.

Cortez slipped away his weapons, but he kept a wary watch on Helene's movements now, for he saw that she was armed, and he knew her nature well enough to expect injury at her hands the very moment opportunity offered.

"Now we will go back to our beef! Caramba! if you try that trick again, there will be somebody shot! Come—your fortune, or your hand. Decide, as you promised Cortez Mendoza you would, a half-moment ago."

Helene soon recovered from the chagrin attending the defeat of her evil purpose; and with the recovery the spirit of defiance rose anew.

"You shall have neither!" she cried, "and you may do your worst! If you think Helene Cercy fears you—wretch!—you are mistaken. Oh-h!" in a half-frenzied tone—"give me but one chance, Cortez Mendoza, and I will rid the world of a villain!"

"Malediction! you tigress! That villain is Cortez Mendoza, I suppose?"

She made no return.

"But, look now," he went on, "what if I were to kill you, this minute, eh, to save my life in the future?"

"You will go back to our beef! Caramba! if you try that trick again, there will be somebody shot! Come—your fortune, or your hand. Decide, as you promised Cortez Mendoza you would, a half-moment ago."

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THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

Published every Monday morning at nine o'clock.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 29, 1873.

The Saturday Journal is sold by all Newsdealers in the United States and in the Canadian Dominion. Parties unable to obtain it from a newsdealer, or those preferring to have the paper sent direct, by mail, from the publication office, are supplied at the following rates:One copy, four months \$1.00Two copies, one year \$5.00In all orders for subscriptions be sure to give address in full—State, County and Town. The paper is always stopped, promptly, at all post offices for subscription. Subscriptions can start with any date number.Canadian subscribers will have to pay 20 cents extra, to prevent American postage.All communications, subscriptions, and letters on business, should be addressed to BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS, 58 WILLIAM ST., NEW YORK.NEXT WEEK,
Mr. Bartley T. Campbell's New Story.

THE RED QUEEN.

A Romance of Old Fort Du Quesne.

It is need hardly say, exceedingly "telling" and dramatic in action, and wonderfully interesting in story.Mr. Campbell's "In the Web," "Laura's Peril," etc., will be remembered by our readers as serials of great beauty and power. In this new work Mr. C. enters a somewhat new field—that of wilderness life. Thoroughly "up" in the local history of the region of old Fort Des Moines, he writes of the days when Washington was a Captain in the English Colonial Army, with a spirit which shows how much he is "at home," in Indian and Border delineations. The "Queen" is a character that will not be likely to be forgotten. Let all read the beautiful story.

Our Arm-Chair.

"Old Probabilities."—One of our correspondents, disgusted with the weather clerks' "deal" of days which bring the Frigid Zone so uncomfortably near to our Firesides, this winter, writes: "I have been thinking of writing a letter to 'Old Probabilities.' He seems to have such admirable control over the weather that he might be persuaded to give us about ten dollars' worth of sunshine during February—let the Great Bear be the Morning Star until May, with a total eclipse of snow-clouds; a fine meteoric display after church, and only one more ice gorge, simply for diversion."We have undoubtedly had a very "hard" winter, but it has, on the whole, been a very bearable one. Nature recuperates, sometimes, by very severe processes, and the exhausted moisture in the hills and the dry fountains in the valleys are to be restored by this avalanche of snow and ice. Intense cold, too, is very purifying to the air, and, though we may have growled and shivered at the weather, it has been, nevertheless, very beneficial, in a sanitary way. We know that certain scientists believe the earth itself is undergoing a change that portends great and serious changes, but, we think, careful observations will show that our seasons run in cycles of about seventeen years, and that the averages of heat and cold will be the same in any given cycle.In some districts or belts of country changes have occurred which seem permanent in their character. For instance: two thousand years ago the climate of Italy was far colder than now. The Loire and Rhone, in ancient Gaul, used to freeze over annually. Juvenal says the Tiber froze so firmly in his day the ice had to be cut to get at the water. Horace indicates the presence of ice and snow in the streets of Rome, and Ovid asserts the Black Sea froze over every year.So extreme was the cold at that far-off period in history, it stands chronicled by the ancients that in Gaul, Germany, Pannonia, Thrace, snow positively covered the ground so long as to prevent the cultivation of olives, grapes and other fruits which are raised there at the present time in abundance. Ice or snow to any considerable amount would now be a phenomenon in Italy.But, despite this instance we can see nothing in the seasons of the last twenty years to indicate any material or permanent modification of the isothermal lines or of the monthly diffusion of heat and light by the relative position of the sun. When changes do come like those prophesied, it will be internal rather than external, and then we shall all see and feel the revolution.What Dime Novels Are.—A Memphis paper referring to a recent DIME NOVEL, says of it and of Dime Novel literature:"No wonder these publications succeed so well. The publisher pays the author a fair price for his work, while the publishers of magazines do not half nor quarter pay the writers that work for them, but grab all the profits and proceed themselves. They look upon writers as drudges, and hence none but drudges will write for them. A good article is hardly ever found in a magazine now. They are unmitigated trash and nauseating drivel. The miserly and unfair dealing of those 'respectable' publishers have driven all promising young writers away from their loaden literature, and consequently driven all readers except a few of the dull, respectably heavy and stupid sort, who cling to old forms and old ghosts of things. This is the great cause of the decline, the atrophy of the magazine literature of the country. You might look in vain through the pages of magazines like *Harper's* for five years at a stretch, to find such a description of scenery as this."And then follows a long quotation from the novel. Without advertizing to the justice or injustice of the strictures on current magazine literature, we can say that BEADLE'S DIME NOVELS' series comprise more thoroughly good and sterling historic romances than any series ever issued in America, at any price. These novels, prepared with exceeding care by authors of unquestioned merit, are a standing rebuke to those who pronounce all cheap books trashy and ephemeral. If Fenimore Cooper were to-day alive he would be called upon to write his best for the Dime Novels' series. We know it is the *fad*, in certain quarters, to belittle this truly great series of national American Romance; but, considering the magnificent success of that series, the publishers can afford to pity these detractors, whose best excuse for their misstatements is their entire ignorance of the books they disparage.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

SUPPOSING you and I are a little better off in our worldly circumstances than our poorer neighbors, and can afford to follow the whims and caprices of Dame Fashion, are we one whit better at heart than they? Do our silks and satins confer any more honor on us than the calico and home-spun do on the less fortunate ones? I grant you that fine clothes gain us more respect, but are those who respect us for the quality of our garments alone, worthy of our esteem?I don't object to good clothes, for we should all dress as well as our circumstances will permit; but the idea of our holding ourselves above others simply because we are "rigged up," is absurd and preposterous, and is ridiculous and laughable as well.Is there such a great difference between one who is called a magnificent beauty, and another who is deemed a "horrid fright"? I admire beauty, though I have no pretensions to it myself; but I don't hate homeliness. If God conferred outward loveliness on one, and plainness on another, is it for us to question His works?No, it is not; but we do it, and more shame for us that we do. We court the affections of beauty, and neglect those of the plain. Yet all the while you will usually find more loveliness in the heart of a person, than in the one endowed with beauty.And the reason is a very natural one. Miss Beauty is so complimented on her good looks, and is told a thousand times how handsome she is, that she has but little room in her brain to think of much else. With Miss Plainly the case is different. She knows she is not handsome; her glass does not deceive her on that point, and she says to herself, "Well, if I haven't any beauty in my face, I must endeavor to cultivate some in my heart."And she does it, and she does it with such a zest that she forgets that there are high bones in her cheeks, that her nose is a trifle longer than she would have had it if she had been the chooser of it; in truth, I verily believe she forgets she has a face at all.Did you ever wander through a cemetery, and read the long and laudatory epitaphs of some of the marble monuments? Did not a wonder come over you as to whether the sleeper deserved all these lines, if he had every one of these virtues which were ascribed to him? What good did so much lettering do? Did it gain the dead an easier entrance into heaven?I have had these thoughts many a time. I have read lines on tombstones that sounded like rank falsehoods, and then I could say, "Now, if those words were transferred to that almost neglected little tombstone in the corner, it would be more like the truth." I knew which had the most right to live in the hearts of us.It seems like wickedness to put a marble cross over the remains of one who never followed its teachings during his life, and neglect the grave of him who was worthy to be called an apostle. Do the dead sleep more calmly in their rosewood caskets than those inclosed in pine-wood coffins? I can not believe it. What is the difference between them?To leave the dead and come back to the living, what is the difference between the high and low? Is money every thing in this world? Are industry, talent, goodness, perseverance naught? If so, then give me a ticket and let me emigrate to some other land.If you're ashamed of your neighbor because he wears a shabby coat, give him a better. If his hands are coarse, give him more wages and less hard work to do, and see if they won't become softer!That's what I like to see—one aiding another. I hate to hear persons talking about the miserable condition of the working classes when they won't do anything to make it better.We are one great family, and, as long as we behave ourselves, I can't see such a vast deal of difference in us. If you can, you have better eyesight than I have. This may be all wrong, but it is the decided opinion of EYE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Later Inventions.

AMONG my more recent inventions are:Printing press that sets its own type, writes its own editorials, and stirs up delinquent subscribers. It answers very well for a clothes' press, or a subsoil plow, or a threshing machine, and is warranted to be of great service.A brick ship, to sail the mighty waters of the great Atlantic. It has a granite foundation, with a fine cellar, and a good well; with a free stone-paved walk running in front of it at the rate of ten knots a mile.A simplified pot-hook, which you can unfold, and it makes a nice spring bonnet for your wife; and it is equally easy to turn it into an overcoat, or you can use it for a handkerchief or a standing collar.A compound toothpick, which will pick any thing out of a hollow tooth from a shoulder of meat to a toothache. You unfold it and behold you have a step-ladder: give it another twist, and then you have a one-horse dray; reverse it, and you have a cottage with three rooms and an acre lot.A pair of scales, which will weigh any thing from a section of the Hoosic tunnel to your sweetheart's lightest words and actions. They will help you to weigh the chances, and on the darkest night will show you the weigh. They will make seven pounds of meat weigh ten if you are selling, or will make ten pounds weigh seven if you are buying; besides helping you to weight for supper. They are warranted to scale a fish or a mountain. They are on a scale of an inch and a half to the foot.A washing-machine so complete that dirty clothes get scared and immediately turn white when they behold it. Every man can now be his own washerwoman.An umbrella, so antagonistic to water that, if you should fall in the river with it, you would come out perfectly dry. It is altogether unnecessary even to hold it over you in a storm. Fold it up and it is a walking cane, press on a spring and it is a coal scuttle; turn it inside out and it is a plug hat, turn it again and you have a pair of boots. Everybody gets dry who carries it.A handy basket, which will carry almost any thing: it will carry the news, carry an election, carry figures over to the next column, carry a joke as far as you want it, but never too far, and, if you should carry too long when the benzine is crimson, you can put yourself into it and carry yourself.home. By reversing it slightly you have a fine brick chimney, and with a very little trouble it is converted into an elegant door-mat; unfold it and you have a cast-iron stove.A splendid bookbinder, which will also bind wheat, bind a contract, bind up a wound, and bind you over to court for a thousand dollars.An iron fire-poker, which will make the laziest fire stir up; change it and you have a splendid cashmere shawl; transmogrify it and you have a number one circular-saw; alter it and you have a spittoon; reverse it and you have a four-posted bedstead; take it in and you have a fine necktie; metamorphose it and you have one of the most complete soap factories in the State.A splendid hair-restorer for bald heads. A friend of mine, whose hair had a falling out with him and refused to acknowledge his crown, used a little too much of it and it grew out so fast that he was compelled to hire six barbers to stand by him constantly and shear it off. He was nearly a gone case, but, on sending for me, I prescribed Wiggles' Restorative, which completely stopped the growth.A turning-machine, which will turn a bedpost, turn an honest penny, turn a somersault, turn a rhyme, turn a grindstone, or turn a paper collar with great facility.A fur-lined overcoat, which may be easily turned into a wheelbarrow by pressing on a spring, or into a pair of spectacles, or suspenders, just as you wish.A meerschaum pipe, which answers very well for a stove-pipe or a Highland bag-pipe—it requires one man to smoke it and another to blow. It is reversible, and can be made into a reversible chair, a hair-curl, or a saw-mill, or a fine-tooth comb.WASHINGTON WHITHORN.

Woman's World.

A Basket Story.—*Fashionable Philanthropy*.—*Nobody's Children*.—*The New York Foundling Asylum*.—*Woman's Work in the Metropolis*."This must be the place—for, see—there is the basket in the vestibule.""Yes, and on the door I see a plate with the words, 'Foundling Asylum,' on it."So my friend I and I mounted the steps, and before ringing the bell, inspected the basket.It was a small basket crib, painted white, and furnished with the whitest and daintiest of plain baby bed-linen. The little pillow was soft as down, the mattress yielded to the touch with the unmistakable elasticity of wool or curled hair, the little ruffled curtains, also pure white, forming a graceful canopy over the little bed, where six or seven little babies—*Nobody's Children*—were soundly asleep.While we stood there, wondering and pitying, there came up the steps two poor women, with two babies in their arms. They evidently were of the humbler classes. We made way for them, and rung the bell. The door was almost instantly opened, by a little blue-eyed girl of about ten years of age, with a brown curly head. She looked very grave and serious, as if she understood the whole situation. In obedience to her request we entered; but as she still held the door open, we were irresistibly attracted to the scene in the vestibule.The poor women advanced, sobbing, to the basket, and laid their babies in it, side by side. They tried to take a farewell kiss of the little sleepers, but returned again and again to clasp them in their arms and weep over them. At last one of them took her baby out of the basket, and started off with it."Oh, my baby! how can I give you up?"But soon she returned and put it back in the little white nest, and started off alone, weeping, but to return and repeat the trying scene, again and again; but at last she resigned her baby, and in a few minutes we saw it and its little companion foundling brought in to the Sisters—for this Asylum was under the charge of the Sisters of Charity.It was three years ago, when I made that visit with my friend, to the Foundling Asylum, which had been only a few months in existence, though the want of such an institution as a means for the prevention of infanticide in the city of New York, had been discussed in this city for several years. Sorosis, our only woman's club, had passed resolutions advocating such a charity; the city press had, loudly and at length, pointed out the necessity for it; but it remained for the Sisters of Charity to make an actual move in the matter. The duty was, somehow or other, expected of them; for, at the doors of their numerous houses, scattered all over the city, these pious workers would frequently find, early in the morning, a bundle in which was enveloped a tiny, wailing waif of humanity. So they began to collect money appropriated by the State Legislature for this noble charity. But I can never forget that women began the work, and women have sustained that beginning; and I know every woman will agree with me when I assert that every good work begun by good women will, sooner or later, like the Foundling Asylum, be accepted and sustained by good and true men. What that asylum may become in the future, who can foresee? What part those little waifs of humanity, *nobody's children*, found in the little basket in the vestibule may be destined to enact upon the future historic page, is a still more interesting and momentous question. EMILY VERDERY.brought up-stairs into the back parlor for the presiding sister's inspection, and, of course, my little blue-eyed girl must see them all, as she is still the portress. If that little girl who stands between the basket and the interior of the asylum could add her impressions to the stories the basket could tell, if it could speak, what touching tales of broken hearts and mortal anguish would be revealed!The sister in charge of the asylum tells me that now there is an average of seven foundlings a day left in the basket. Three thousand in all have been found in it. Of these, one thousand three hundred are living and in charge of the sisters, or out at nurse, and visited by them at the nurses' houses. Many have been returned to the parents, generally in case of the marriage of the father and mother, but more than half have died!This proportion is smaller than the number of deaths occurring in European foundling asylums, and it is not considered a large proportion when the facts are taken into consideration: first, that the children are frequently in a dying condition when found in the basket; second, that many have come in with cruel marks of violence on their little bodies, showing that they had barely escaped murder at the hands of one or the other parent; third, that a large proportion are fearfully and hopelessly diseased when they are left, and others so scantily clothed, even in mid-winter, they are almost frozen when found.I also learned that it takes \$11,000 a month to provide for these children and their one thousand nurses; that the city gives from its treasury, \$8,000 of this money, and the remaining \$3,000 is supplied by private benevolence; and, moreover, that this private benevolence has its principal flow from the *fashionable* classes of society in New York. If any one doubts it, let them visit the asylum on any Tuesday, between the hours of 11 A.M. and 4 P.M.They will see more diamonds, velvets, costly furs, laces, and silks, there than on a whole block on Broadway or Fifth Avenue; and they will see those same silks, and velvet-robed dames at work with their needles and scissors, their white and jeweled fingers busily fastening the garments for those thirteen hundred babies, the *nobody's children*, daily deposited.We sometimes hear people, particularly country people, talking about the "wickedness of New York." Well, I know it is wicked, but show me another city on the face of the globe where it is *fashionable* to be so truly benevolent as those ladies are who sustain, or help to sustain, this much-needed institution? Along with our city's corruptions stand her wondrous charities—wondrous that New York has been styled "The City of Charities."I learned, further, that there would soon be a new Foundling Asylum building, or buildings, erected at a cost of over \$100,000, on a square in the upper part of the city, lying between 68th and 69th streets, and Lexington and Third Avenues, in close proximity to the Central Park. The land also valued at \$100,000 both land and money appropriated by the State Legislature for this noble charity. But I can never forget that women began the work, and women have sustained that beginning; and I know every woman will agree with me when I assert that every good work begun by good women will, sooner or later, like the Foundling Asylum, be accepted and sustained by good and true men. What that asylum may become in the future, who can foresee? 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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

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MARY.

BY JOHNNIE DANE.

Mary, a maiden with flowing curls,
And light as any fairy,
I see her now as I saw her then—
My little child-love, Mary.

Years have passed since we parted then;
I vowed to forget her—never;
We parted, knowing was for years,
And perhaps might be forever.

Mary, a maiden of noble form,
And queenly grace, said her,
Safe and secure, said the storm,
Of fashion's throng, I found her.

She fair as ever; forgotten I;
Or, may be in times of sadness,
She sometimes thought of the fair-haired boy,
Whose love to her now seemed madness.

Mary: a white stone marks the place
Where they laid her, she my fairy,
And my heart laid in the ground beneath
The stone that says but "Mary."

A Slight Difference.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"I AM determined to get a husband this season, at all events. You hear that, Rosa, I suppose? So make all your arrangements for a month, at least, at Long Branch."

Miss Myrtle Windybalm looked very decisive indeed as she delivered her words; and little Rosa, Mivart bent her graceful head lower over a lace overskirt she was mending; bent down that Miss Windybalm might not see the smile that rippled over her face.

Such a sweet face as it was, too—one that Miss Myrtle often envied as she gazed at it, so pure, and fresh, and girlish with its olive complexion, dark, hazel eyes and satin brown hair.

But, after all, it was Rosa Mivart's mouth that constituted her chiefest beauty, so perfect was it, whether shut, looking so like folded rose leaves, or a crimson Cupid's bow, or parted in laughter, or conversation, so that it disclosed the even, white teeth, and brought the one deep dimple in her pink cheek.

Rosa was marvelously pretty; Rosa was poor, and she would have been homeless, friendless, moneyless, had not Miss Windybalm, who was fair, fat, forty, and comfortably off, needed her for maid, traveling companion, friend. Not that Rosa enjoyed the position so very much, further than it supplied shelter, raiment, and food; for Miss Windybalm's disposition was hardly angelic.

However, there were brighter spots in Rosa's dull life of late, than darning lace overskirts, trimming and re-trimming Miss Windybalm's evening dresses, and humorizing all that lady's conceits.

And the bright spots were, first a series of watering-place visits, Newport, Cape May, Saratoga, and now last of all, Long Branch. Rosa liked such a life at times; why shouldn't she, young, healthy and pretty, as she never did have a dance in the saloon, or wear a better dress than a prim gray and black *crepe du chine*?

The other bright spot in Rosa's life—not least by any means because mentioned last, was Guy Delfonda.

And it was of this friend of hers—for Mr. Delfonda, a constant caller on Miss Windybalm, and the owner of a hundred thousand dollars, could hardly be expected to be more than a thoughtful kind friend of a girl who earned her living—that Rosa was thinking when Miss Myrtle's words were spoken. Then Rosa looked up from her sewing.

"I will pack your trunks to-night, then, Miss Windybalm. You will wear your steel-gray traveling suit? or the white linen?"

Miss Myrtle considered the matter solemnly.

"Well, between us two, Rosa, I might as well wear the silver-gray sack. It is the most becoming, I think, and affairs have come to such a pass, Rosa, that I feel as if I could not afford to lose the slightest chance. Just think of it, Rosa—this is a solemn secret—I am nearly thirty, and unmarried still."

And Rosa, who knew well enough that she was on the shady side of forty, smiled in a manner that that lady never felt quite satisfied with, for she could not tell for the life of her whether Rosa was making fun or not.

Now Rosa laughed.

"If you are, Miss Myrtle, you don't look it. Your hair and complexion are wonderfully preserved."

Miss Myrtle looked pensively in the glass.

"Ye-e-s, so they are; and, would you believe it, Mr. Delfonda never suspects I use dye and paint. Rosa, I am determined to marry Guy Delfonda this season, and that is why I'm going to Long Branch. He'll be there."

Rosa started, then shut her lips defiantly. What if Mr. Delfonda did marry old Miss Windybalm? It was no one's affair but his own—at least none of hers. Then, an hour after, when she went to pack Miss Myrtle's trunks, some suspicious moisture kept dimming her sight; she hated Long Branch, for what good was it all to her, who deserved as much as other people? She hated Miss Windybalm, because she was in love—no, it was Guy Delfonda she despised—after all, what need it all matter? She was only poor Rosa Mivart, and such she would be to the end of the chapter.

"Such a horrid, stuffy little room! Why, Rosa, do you suppose I could have endured it if I hadn't been kept up by the delightful fact that I was engaged—actually engaged?"

Miss Windybalm smiled serenely from her uncomfortable chair, where she sat fanning, over to Rosa, who was leaning idly against the window.

"I am glad to congratulate you, and I suppose Mr. Delfonda is the happy suitor."

And at the bitterness in her voice Miss Windybalm started in surprise.

"Well, upon my word! You snap at me as if I had done you a great injustice. Bless me, Rosa Mivart, I hope you're not jealous! I do hope you did not expect Mr. Delfonda to marry you?"

For all answer the fiery blushes surged over Rosa's cheeks, and Miss Myrtle went on contentedly:

"He did propose so beautifully. To tell the truth, Rosa, I thought he was a little vague, and once I actually thought he meant the offer for somebody else, and he was telling me by mistake. He is to come for his answer this afternoon. He is so thoughtful, Rosa, too, for he said he would speak to you when he came; but, of course,

he intends offering you the same position you hold, only as his wife's maid instead of Miss Windybalm's. Eh, Rosa?"

For the delightful conceit sent beaming smiles all over Miss Myrtle's face, while Rosa fought so hard to keep back the tears that were too ready to come.

"You may lay out my pale-blue silk with the white lace waist and overskirt, Rosa. Guy will be here in half an hour now, and, of course, I want to be attired for the occasion. You had better wear the grenadine I gave you—it is plain and very suitable."

So Miss Windybalm and Rosa Mivart awaited Guy Delfonda's call matrimonial.

A quiet-voiced, grand-faced man of thirty-five he was, with a look all over him that would have led a perfect stranger to place confidence in him. Just such a strong-hearted, proud-spirited man, that Rosa Mivart's whole soul went out to, and as she watched him up the room, oh! the dumb anguish there was in her heart, that Miss Windybalm—But her thoughts were suddenly dispersed, for Mr. Delfonda, instead of going up to Miss Windybalm, who awaited him all smiles and softness, in her arm-chair, crossed over to Rosa, and extended his hand.

"My darling, how can I thank you?"

"Mr. Delfonda, may I beg to know what that means?"

It was Miss Windybalm's sharp, curt voice, her sharp light eyes that were going from Mr. Delfonda's face to Rosa's, that, in its astonishment, paled and flushed delictiously.

"The devil you will!" exclaimed the landlord, his temper rather excited.

"White father no play—no lose white squaw; play—lose white squaw every time."

Old Shook did not relish the boasting words of the Indian. In his younger days he had been a mighty man at cards, and now, for this heathen savage to coolly announce to him that he could flax him like blazes with the "papers" was more than the blood of the old man could stand.

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"The Indian's keen eyes were fixed searching upon the other's face. He saw that he was yielding to the temptation, and a glimmer, that told of anticipated triumph, shone in the dark eyes.

"I can't do it!" the old man muttered to himself. "I've jined the church, and it's ag'in my principles to touch them devil's picture-books, but I would like to take the conceit out of this heathen, though, I sw'ar."

The chief noticed this indecision, and carelessly took up the cards. Shuffling them a few times, he then dealt the old man five cards, then himself five, and, as he returned the pack to the table, Shook saw that the under card was the ace of hearts.

The old man's eyes followed the Indian's movements, with an eager, hungry look.

"Let white father look at hand; maybe he play chief then," the red-skin said, gruffly.

"I sw'ar I'd like to flax the heathen," Old Pop muttered, and then, no longer able to resist the temptation, he took up the five cards and chuckled as he looked at them. He held four kings and a jack: a hand which only four aces could beat, and with his own eyes, Shook had seen that one of the aces was at the bottom of the pack on the table; therefore it was clearly impossible that the Indian could hold the four aces.

Shook looked searchingly at the savage. The Indian sat perfectly impassible; his cards lay on the table; he had not looked at them yet.

"Again looking at his hand, he muttered:

"I reckon that it won't be much of a sin, arter all, to take the conceit out of this pesky savage, jist for once."

"It's to be a straight game—the hands ag'in each other jist as we hold 'em?" he demanded.

The Indian gravely nodded assent.

"I'll play on one condition, chief," said Shook, suddenly, as an idea occurred to him.

"White father speak—Injun do, p'haps?"

"That et I win, you'll give up your then religion and become a Christian?"

A slight smile played for a moment around the corners of the Indian's mouth, then he inclined his head gravely.

"Big Injun do as white father says, if white father win."

"I r'ally must flax him," thought the conscientious Shook.

At that moment Bob Shook and Johnny Bird entered the room, and were considerably astonished when they found the landlord of the Waterproof engaged in a little game with the Blackfoot chief, and were still more astonished when told what the stakes were on either side.

"Look out that the heathen don't flax you, father," Bob hinted in the old man's ear.

"He can't do it," whispered the old man.

"It will take four aces to beat me and I seed one on 'em at the bottom of the pack."

"Maybe he let you see it on purpose and has rung in a 'cold deal' on you."

"I tell you I see'd it plain enough; I ain't a flat," the old landlord retorted, quite angry.

The Indian had evidently used his ears since he had been hanging round the white men's camp, as this phrase proved.

"You're barking up the wrong tree, Injun," responded old Shook, good-naturedly. "The fact is, we don't sell our squaws, as you red-skins do."

"No sell squaw?" said the Indian, slowly and in evident astonishment.

"No; we give 'em away. When they see a fellow that they want to tie to, they jist spit it out to us, and then we say, 'sail in,' and the two fix the affair up."

The chief was silent for a few minutes, evidently pondering over the words of the white man; then an idea seemed to flash across his mind, and he surveyed Shook with a beaming smile on his dusky features.

"Maybe chief know now," he said, slowly.

"Squaw want to go with chief, white father say yes, too?"

This plain and straight-forward question was a poser to Shook. He scratched his head for a moment; then he stroked his chin.

"Well—" he said, meditatively.

"Ugh!" and the Indian gave a grunt of discontent. "When Injun speaks straight, white father no answer?" and his tone plainly betrayed that he considered himself aggrieved.

"Chief got two now; wants white squaw bad," was the laconic reply.

"I don't believe that the gal would have you!" Shook exclaimed, just a little impatiently.

"White father means that he would not give her to chief at all?" The savage evidently was discontented.

"Well, chief, I r'ally own I should object."

"White father no take two squaws, one pony, gold-dust—ugh?"

"We can't trade," Shook replied.

Then the Indian sat and thought for quite a long time while the other watched him with a comical grin.

Suddenly the Blackfoot bent over and

laid his bony finger impressively on the old man's arm.

"Mud Turtle know 'nother way to get squaw."

Then, from beneath the folds of his blanket, he produced a dirty pack of cards, which he laid down on the table; then he pointed to them:

"Chief know?"

"Keerds!" and the old man nodded.

"Big Injun put two squaw, one pony, bag gold-dust up 'g'in' little white squaw, play barefooted-on-top-of-head-father poker—how's that for high?"

Old Shook stared with open mouth at the savage, as he made this offer.

"What?" he said, in utter astonishment.

"Flax white father like blazes!" the Indian said, sententiously.

"The devil you will!" exclaimed the landlord, his temper rather excited.

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"The Indian's keen

a strange voice close by the stranger's side. He looked up and saw that the Chinaman had approached and stood by the table, with a broad grin upon his olive face.

"No, thank you, John; I've got all I want," the young man replied. On the Pacific Slope all natives of the celestial nation bear the common name of John.

Then the movements of the almond-eyed son of the flowery nation excited the wonder of the young stranger. The Chinaman crept cautiously to the door, listened for a moment, then returned to the table and bent down mysteriously.

"Wanted see 'Mélican man Talbee?'

This was as near as the celestial could come to the name of Injun Dick.

"Yes!" exclaimed the young man, eagerly.

"What you give me?" asked the Chinaman, shrewdly.

The young man took a gold dollar from his pocket and held it up.

"Me tellee for dollee," the celestial said, tersely.

"Go on."

"'Mélican man calleh herself Smithee."

Rimee nodded to let the heathen see that he understood him. As the young man had guessed, Talbot had been passing under an assumed name.

"Gived dollee!" and the Chinaman extended his hand.

"Hold on a moment, my friend," Rimee said, holding the coin out of the reach of the other; "you haven't quite earned your dollar, yet. Where is this man now?"

The celestial hesitated for a moment.

"Me don't knowee," he replied, at last.

Rimee was convinced from the manner of the man that he was not speaking the truth. He did not say so, but quietly returned the dollar to his pocket-book and commenced eating again.

The Chinaman heaved a deep sigh when the gold-piece disappeared. Then he went to the door and listened again, then came back.

"Mee do knowee; me t'aid tellee," he said, in a whisper.

"Speak and the dollar is yours." And again Rimee held the yellow gold-piece up before the eyes of the celestial.

"Me tellee," the Chinaman said, decided.

ly, but with a cautious glance around him.

"Go ahead then and be quick," Rimee said, impatiently.

"'Mélican man, face hidee—threwee las-

so; take Talbee' way off in mountains."

Rimee started in amazement as this intelligence fell upon his ears. If the heathen spoke the truth, Talbot was in the hands of the road-agents!

"How do you know that this is so?" the young man asked, sternly. The thought occurred to him that perhaps the wily son of the East was lying in order to possess himself of the gold dollar.

"'Mélican man come long road—see 'Mélican mans hidee—he hidee too. No likee 'Mélican man's face hidee. See muchee—no tellee.' 'Mélican mans killee John."

"How many were there with their faces hiddee?"

The celestial held up three fingers.

"You are not lying?" Rimee cried, sternly.

"John no lie—how could he?" said the celestial, in an injured tone.

"There's your dollar."

The eyes of the heathen glistened as his fingers touched the gold-piece, and straightway he departed.

"Talbot must be saved, no matter what the cost!" the stranger cried, with compressed lips and an angry brow.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 152.)

The False Widow: OR, FLORIEN REDESDALE'S FORTUNE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CICILY'S
DECEIT," "STEADILY WED," "MADAME
DURAND'S PROTEGES," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

A LITTLE LOVE-AFFAIR.

"How do I look, Gerry? Are these roses becoming? And my flounces—I'm such an insignificant little thing that I can't wear deep ones, but Madame Eissler draped and looped them beautifully. Do I need any thing more?"

Miss Cornelia Day turned herself slowly around for her friend's inspection. She was exquisitely dressed in pink silk and white point, with clusters of moss rosebuds in her fluffy yellow hair.

"Lovely!" ejaculated Geraldine. "Madame Eissler has taste, but one with your fair complexion can wear any thing that's delicate. Now I have to resort to the deepest hues of the rainbow—we brunettes haven't the liberty of choice you blondes can take. You do need something more, though. Hold here till I pencil your eyebrows just the least bit in the world—it gives such a piquant east to the countenance. Just a dust more of powder to take that polish off your forehead—then, now you're perfect. I believe I'd have chosen white flowers if I were you, though nothing could be sweeter than those clusters of half-opened buds."

"They just match the shade of my dress," answered Cornelia, and a blush which might have been the reflection of light from the pink silk swept over her face. The true secret of her choosing them was this: at the ball of New Year's Eve, Aubrey had been rather extravagant in his praises of Miss Redesdale's toilet in her hearing, and had especially remarked the effect of her simple decorations—clusters of moss rosebuds precisely like these. Not for the world would Miss Day have admitted that she had studied every detail of her dress with a view to pleasing his taste, or that he had maneuvered to accompany the Lessinghams from their own house that she might have a fair excuse for monopolizing Aubrey through the evening.

"Everybody will be at the opera tonight, I suppose," chattered Cornelia. "Oh, Gerry! that corn-colored moire is just heavenly; and the lace—real Chantilly, isn't it? You look like a queen, I declare. I wonder, now, what that Miss Redesdale will wear. I can't see any thing so remarkable about her that every one should be going into raptures; it must be that she's a new star in the firmament, I think."

"Oh, I dare say," answered Gerry, carelessly, but not without an inward twinge. "Does my opera-cloak need a pin there in the back? What a darling hood! Even Aubrey, who is usually so indifferent, goes into ecstasies of admiration over her. It's

shameful, and I'm very indignant at him; I've got other plans for that brother of mine, and I'll be just heart-broken if he disappoints me, Ready, Neely? There he is, the impatient mortal."

"Now, then, girls, are you coming?" called Aubrey, from the stairway. "We're sure to be late, and there'll be such a crush as we don't often see."

"Ready, brother. Oh, my fan; where is your bouquet, Cornelia? Not that handkerchief, Annette; one of my newest set. Come, my dear boy, please don't keep us waiting."

"Cool, 'pon honor, after I've been fuming for an hour. I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't made the discovery myself, but there is one of your sex in this city who can be ready for an expedition of any sort on time. You ladies, I believe, would expect the angel Gabriel to blow his trumpet a second time if you were here to be favored with the 'winding of his horn.'"

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recognition were exchanged. Meeting Aubrey's glance, Florien leaned forward, and, with a wave of her fan, beckoned him to approach. He made his excuses to his sister and her friend, and sauntered over to their box.

"Your most devoted, Miss Redesdale, that is if any one could attain that distinction. Our in honor of *La Petite Louise*—she's a star of the first magnitude, they say. Arnold, do go over and keep Gerry in good humor for two minutes' time. You shouldn't grudge me that much with the whole box."

"Now, then, girls, are you coming?" called Aubrey, from the stairway. "We're sure to be late, and there'll be such a crush as we don't often see."

"Ready, brother. Oh, my fan; where is your bouquet, Cornelia? Not that handkerchief, Annette; one of my newest set. Come, my dear boy, please don't keep us waiting."

"Cool, 'pon honor, after I've been fuming for an hour. I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't made the discovery myself, but there is one of your sex in this city who can be ready for an expedition of any sort on time. You ladies, I believe, would expect the angel Gabriel to blow his trumpet a second time if you were here to be favored with the 'winding of his horn.'"

"Wanted see 'Mélican man Talbee?'"

This was as near as the celestial could come to the name of Injun Dick.

"Yes!" exclaimed the young man, eagerly.

"What you give me?" asked the Chinaman, shrewdly.

The young man took a gold dollar from his pocket and held it up.

"Me tellee for dollee," the celestial said, tersely.

"Go on."

"'Mélican man calleh herself Smithee."

Rimee nodded to let the heathen see that he understood him. As the young man had guessed, Talbot had been passing under an assumed name.

"Gived dollee!" and the Chinaman extended his hand.

"Hold on a moment, my friend," Rimee said, holding the coin out of the reach of the other; "you haven't quite earned your dollar, yet. Where is this man now?"

The celestial hesitated for a moment.

"Me don't knowee," he replied, at last.

Rimee was convinced from the manner of the man that he was not speaking the truth. He did not say so, but quietly returned the dollar to his pocket-book and commenced eating again.

The Chinaman heaved a deep sigh when the gold-piece disappeared. Then he went to the door and listened again, then came back.

"Mee do knowee; me t'aid tellee," he said, in a whisper.

"Speak and the dollar is yours." And again Rimee held the yellow gold-piece up before the eyes of the celestial.

"Me tellee," the Chinaman said, decided.

ly, but with a cautious glance around him.

"Go ahead then and be quick," Rimee said, impatiently.

"'Mélican man, face hidee—threwee las-

so; take Talbee' way off in mountains."

Rimee started in amazement as this intelligence fell upon his ears. If the heathen spoke the truth, Talbot was in the hands of the road-agents!

"How do you know that this is so?" the young man asked, sternly. The thought occurred to him that perhaps the wily son of the East was lying in order to possess himself of the gold dollar.

"'Mélican man come long road—see 'Mélican mans hidee—he hidee too. No likee 'Mélican man's face hidee. See muchee—no tellee.' 'Mélican mans killee John."

"How many were there with their faces hiddee?"

The celestial held up three fingers.

"You are not lying?" Rimee cried, sternly.

"John no lie—how could he?" said the celestial, in an injured tone.

"There's your dollar."

The eyes of the heathen glistened as his fingers touched the gold-piece, and straightway he departed.

"Talbot must be saved, no matter what the cost!" the stranger cried, with compressed lips and an angry brow.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 152.)

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A very serious light was in the eyes fixed so intently upon him, a very grave shade upon the fair face turned toward him. Who had been maligning him to her?—what had she heard, he wondered? He had a very uncomfortable sensation of chills creeping up his back, and impeded respiration. That very day he had put off one of his most urgent creditors by a hint that he was soon to take to himself a wealthy bride. He was most impatiently waiting his time to urge her to a speedy consummation of the engagement. Had that open disregard of her injunction come to her ears already? Whatever it might be, there was no way for it except to fact out the result.

"No, 'pon honor, Florry, I don't think I should like you to know every act of mine. We all do vastly foolish and inconsiderate things at times, and I can't suppose that I've acted wisely and well during even the eighteen months since you made me blessed with the promise of your hand. I throw myself upon your mercy there. I don't suppose even you would be willing to drag out to exposure all the events of time, taken a part in during that length of time."

"That is not the sense in which I ask you, Walter. I have not been trying to mystify you, and I shall make my meaning perfectly lucid. I have been told that you gamble—it is so?"

"Well, if it is, what then? Better men have done worse things."

"Perhaps, but you were stigmatized as a professional gambler—worse than that, a decoy. That you made it a purpose to lure your friends where they should be made your victims—or victims of others who remunerated you for the service."

He was listening with hardly forced composure, fearful that more was to come. But to Florry he seemed quietly assured, with a smile playing about his lips.

"What other sins in the catalogue have been accredited to me, or is that all?"

"Is it true, Walter?"

"Do you believe it, Florry?"

Her face reflected her doubt as she strove to read his, impassive as a mask. She parted her lips as if to reply, and then glanced down without uttering a word. She remembered how direct her information had been, and in a measure how conclusive.

"I see that you do. Oh, Florry, little Florry, who promised to trust me always, whatever should betide, are you to fail me with all the rest?"

Such a pathetic voice, burdened with such tender reproach! It brought the quick tears into Florry's eyes, and did more to re-establish her shaken trust in him than any other appeal he could have made.

"Tell me that it is not true, Walter."

"It is not true."

"You have not gambled?"

"Ah, there you have me. I have been discouraged and I have gambled. I was in a hurry to be rich to have something to offer you besides myself, and somehow I seemed always to be unfortunate in business."

"What is your business, Walter? How have you been trying to make yourself more acceptable to me?"

"My dear child, what use of troubling your brain with such matters? I'll hunt up my books of receipts and expenses for the last year and go over them with you if you see fit, and I don't believe I can satisfy you without. I've just simply watched my chances and done what I could on Wall street in stocks and bonds, and the like. Heavens! to see the fortunes that change hands there every day, week in and week out. Why, there have been times with the proper means at command, that I could have become a millionaire in a morning. It's this thing of dabbling with dollars where I want thousands that keeps me down."

"Gambling on a more extensive scale," said Florry, dryly. "It's nothing but that, is it?"

"It's a game of chance, like every other thing in the world. What would you have me do—labor by the sweat of my brow for my daily crust, and see you as far placed above me as the stars are above the earth? Florry, won't you understand that what I've done has been for the sake of shortening the time I must wait before I can insist on the fulfillment of your promise? You know that I love you for yourself only—that I loved you before you knew of your own fortune. If it wasn't for dooming you to privation, I would wish it never had come to you, since it is to be a bar between us."

"It is not, Walter. You know that it is not. I am not so mercenary as that. You know that when I do marry you, all I have shall be freely at your command as it is at my own. It was not for the money-making part of it that I wanted to see you follow some business and make your own way up. Only active and actual experience will expand a man's best qualities and bring out his nobility of heart and feeling. Your own promptings of independence too, dictated the same course, but you know that while you should be simply unfortunate, I would not permit a shade of difference to be made in our plans on that account. While you struggle honestly against odds, you really deserve greater credit than in succeeding where there is no obstacle in the way; but when you resort to dishonesty—well, then, questionable means to promote yourself, you forfeit that sterling principle which no worldly wealth can replace."

"Your dear little preacher, what a sermon you have given me! You're awfully straight up and down on these points. I don't pretend to defend gambling—that was our original split, wasn't it?—but I've done nothing more than ninety-nine out of every hundred men you meet have done along with me. I don't suppose I could name a half dozen out of my entire circle of acquaintances who are not found at the tables once in a while—strictly moral men whom you would never suspect of stepping outside their beaten routine of trade, as well as wild young blades who are flushed of pocket-money."

"We are wandering from the main point, Walter. I don't want to discuss the vice; I want to know if you are addicted to it."

"And I assure you that I am not."

After their protracted discussion, during which he had regained his assurance, he was prepared to answer with all apparent frankness in the manner he knew would most readily allay her suspicions, and without the slightest regard for truth.

"You—I'm ashamed to ask it, Walter—you never did act the despicable part of a decoy?"

"Never, upon my sacred honor!"

How sacred Walter Lynne held his honor

can be imagined, but the reply satisfied Florry.

"Just one thing more—you will not gamble again? Don't, please. And—and if you should need money, Walter, come to me, but don't resort to that again."

"My dear, generous little girl! You unsophisticated child, don't you know I could only accept any thing from you in one character?"

"You haven't promised me."

He hesitated, just enough to give weight to the required bond.

"I do promise, Florry, because you wish it. I will never gamble again. I'm a reformed man from this moment, if it is re-forming to forsake a vice which has never fastened upon one. If you'd only consent to be my mentor from this time out—what can I say to persuade you to return, Florry?"

What he might have said, or what she might have answered, must be classed with unsolved mysteries. There was a sweep and rustle of silken draperies, the curtains shrouding their retreat were parted, and Mrs. Redesdale stood before them.

"Florry, child, the carriage is awaiting us. Can't we put you down at your own door, Mr. Lynne? Oh, no trouble, I assure you."

"He would have overcome her scruples in five minutes more," the lady mused, "and had her name the wedding-day. That would have been awkward. How fortunate I chanced to be within earshot."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 149.)

The Rock Rider:

OR, THE SPIRIT OF THE SIERRA.

A TALE OF THE THREE PARKS.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.
AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJAH," "THE KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "DOUBLE-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

CATO.

CLEAR and bright broke the dawn over the romantic South Park the morning after the storm. The mist that filled the valley was thicker than ever, but when the sun cleared it up the scene was beautiful. Every leaf and flower held its gem, and the songs of birds filled the groves.

The Indians had disappeared entirely from the valley, but a trail of dead bodies showed what a merciless slaughter had pursued them during the previous night, even through storm and darkness, to the passes of the Sierra.

The corral of wagons still remained where it had been, but the fires of a numerous body of cavalry soldiers dotted the greensward around the pool that had so long mocked the defenders of the train, and rewarded all their sufferings with its cool waters.

High up on the mountain-side, in the western Sierra, old Black Cato was standing at the mouth of the gorge that led to the Cavern of Death, watching with wonder and alarm the progress of a riderless mule that was coming up the pass toward him.

"Golly sakes alive!" muttered the negro; "wurra dat fur? Dat ole Mountaineer come back all alone, and whar's marse Cappin Beckford?" Hyar he been done gone fur two days, and nebbur a word come to ole Cato, and now hyar come Mountaineer all alone. Suflin' must 'a' happened to marse Cappin. Mebbe he want Cato, and send Mountaineer to fetch him. Whar's you come from, ole gal?"

It was strange all this time Cato seemed to have no suspicion that any thing more than a mere slight accident had happened to his master. Danger he seemed not to think of. His confidence in that master's prowess was too complete and unswerving.

And now he waited quietly for the mule to come up, anticipating some message from the hand of his beloved captain. Such messages had come to him before.

The mule walked slowly up, and as she came close, began to bray as if in recognition.

"Ha! ole gal, you know Cato!" exclaimed the negro. "He gib you de nice wile oats, don't he? an' you want moah. Well, you shall hab 'um, ole gal, so you shall. Now what news you bring?"

The mule came up and rubbed her head against the negro, who cast a hasty glance at the deep Mexican saddle.

That glance was sufficient for Cato.

The next instant he uttered a sort of yell of anguish, and tore his hair in despair.

The whole of the left side of the saddle, from pommel to cantle, was soaked in blood which had freshly dried there, and presented clear evidence of harm to his master.

Cato fell on his knees in a moment, and with the pious habits of his race, and prayed aloud with fervor, strangely mixed with despair.

"Oh, Lord, what for you done dis? Oh, Lord, please don't take away good, sweet marse Cappin from po' Cato!" Oh, wurra is gwine to do, ef marse Cappin dead? What shall I go? Wurra is I to do? Oh, marse Cappin, marse Cappin, don't you done go die, 'way from po' Cato! Little Missy Evy she gone, missis she gone, an' is you gwine, too, to leave po' Cato? Oh, it can't be! It shant be! I's gwine arter him, ef it kills Mountaineer. Oh, Mountaineer, good ole gal! take me to marse Cappin, do! Dat's a good ole gal, and I gib you all de corn you wants fo' you life, ef you does it, shuh!"

He jumped up from his knees with nervous hurry, as he said the last words, and tightened the mule's girths. Mountaineer seemed to know what was required of her, for she turned round and trotted off with Cato as cheerfully as if fresh from a stable, and soon brought him into the valley of the South Park, by the same glade where Belcour had found *Éclair*, two days before.

Cato was quite unaware of the changes that had taken place in the valley the previous night. The driving storm had drowned the sounds of the rifle-shots, and he knew not but what the Indians were still there. In any event, he had only one object in view, and that was to see his master, and die with him if need be. Cato was one of the old type of slaves, faithful to death; and to him and his master, buried in those solitudes for thirteen years, the war and its resulting emancipation were entirely unknown.

His surprise then was no greater than his joy, at seeing the valley clear of foes, and the United States flag floating over the wagons in the corral.

"Oh, bress de Lord!" cried Cato. "Meb-

be marse Cappin not dead, affah all. Dar de deah ole flag once moah, an' de sojers what Cato nebbur see no moah for ten, twenty yeah. Oh, bress de Lord! Ise gwine to see marse Cappin Beckford once moah, like a *real cappin* on a *hoss*, not on dem po' trash of mules. An' den I gets Mountaineer, mebbe."

The revulsion in his spirits was as great as had been the depression. For a moment he had forgot the ominous blood-stains on Mountaineer's saddle, and rejoiced at the sight of arms, as none but an old camp-follower can do. He galloped into the camp, with a broad grin on his black face, showing every tooth in his head, with delight, and yelling:

"Bress de Lord, oh my soul! Whar's marse Cappin Beckford? Oh, gummens, isn't I glad to see ye, *jest*! Oh, whar's marse Cappin Beckford? Somebody tell me, or Ise gwine to bu'st!"

The soldiers looked up laughing from the fire, and a roar of merriment spread through the camp, as the grotesque-looking negro, in his garb of skins, mounted on the scraggy mule, careered through the camp.

But Mountaineer appeared to know where she was going, for she held on steadily till she halted by a fire where a group of officers were standing.

Cato jumped off as the officers turned round, and peered anxiously into the face of every one there. Then he turned away disappointed, muttering:

"H'm not daa. Whar de debbil is he?"

"Here, my man, what do you want?" asked a stern voice, as Colonel Davis beckoned him forward from the group.

Instantly, as with the long forgotten habit of discipline, Cato doffed his cap respectfully, and stood twiddling it between his hands, as he hesitatingly said:

"Please, marse Cato, Ise come to see, marse colonel—ef I kin find ole marse Cappin Beckford 'mong you gummens—I begs parding, gummens—"

The colonel advanced eagerly a pace, and laid both hands on Cato's shoulders, whom he scrutinized attentively.

Then he let go and muttered:

"My God! It's Cato! Alive and well! Wonder will never cease."

"Yes, marse colonel," said Cato, doubtfully, respecting struggling with a desire to recognize the other, "Cato is 'live, sah, but I doesn't quite 'zactly 'member you, sah. 'Scuse me, sah."

"What, Cato, have you forgotten Lieutenant Davis, you rascal? Don't you remember who caught you stealing his whisky, and kicked you down the quartermaster's steps?" asked the colonel, with a half-laugh at the recollection.

Cato changed instantly, and set up a counter-yell of his own laughter.

"Oh, now I recklex, marse Davis. Golly! how mad you was, marse Davis! An' how we black fellers got square for dat kickin', de ve'y nex' day! Yah! yah! yah! marse Davis, how you did go on, *shuh*, when you foun' all you' hams and chickens gone, an' nobody do'no' nuffin' b'out 'em. Yah! yah! yah!"

The howl of laughter with which Cato greeted the remembrance was contagious. It set all the officers laughing in turn, whether they understood the joke or not, and the stout colonel laughed as loud as any. But Cato suddenly remembered his manners, and pulled up short with remarkable promptness.

"Beg parding, marse Davis," he observed, "but Ise forgot. Does you know what marse Cappin Beckford is, sah? Ise come to see 'im!"

The colonel's countenance instantly grew grave. A sudden, painful memory seemed to come over him, and he said kindly:

"Your master is dangerously wounded, Cato, and he lies in yonder tent, attended by my daughter. Go to him at once, and some other time you shall tell me how you escaped when we thought you frozen to death, and where you and your master have been all these years."

Of all this address Cato only seemed to realize the first sentence. He stood stupidly, muttering:

"Dange'rously wounded. Oh, Heavenly Fader! Wurra dat fur?"

But he seemed to understand where to go, for he moved off slowly toward a large wall-tent, pitched close to the wagons, and raising the flap, entered to find his beloved master extended on a camp-bed, pale and half asleep, with blood-stained bandages on his left thigh, while a pretty young lady sat watching by the bedside, weeping softly to herself.

Cato uttered a low groan of mortal grief and terror at that sight, and poor Beckford opened his eyes.

Those eyes had lost the wild, excited look they formerly wore, and large, dark and serious, they gazed on Cato, as the wounded man said, in a low voice:

"The dream has come true, Cato, but not as I thought. I shall soon see Evy now, but it will be in heaven, for my eyes are opened, and I am dying."

Cato dropped on his knees and burst into a tempest of convulsive sobs as the wounded captain spoke.

CHAPTER XXXI.

RED LIGHTNING'S STORY.

COLONEL DAVIS was standing thoughtfully gazing at the fire. He had regained one of his daughters, but the other was as yet missing. His only clue to her whereabouts was the statement of Belcour, who had told him of the mysterious disappearance of Blanche Davis, when he himself was struck down senseless by the Indians. Belcour and Brinkerhoff had gone off that very morning with Somers and Buford to explore the glen where the wonderful Spirit of the Sierra had been first seen, and little Yakop had accompanied them, in the hope that canine sagacity might discover a clue where human wisdom failed.

The dark-skinned colonel, full of concealed impatience, was yet to all outward appearance impulsive and calm, while awaiting the result of their discoveries, and listening attentively for the rifle-shot that was to be the signal that they had arrived at the glen.

In the mean time he issued the necessary orders for patrolling the valley and the neighboring woods, to guard against any lurking Indians who might be disposed to avenge their recent discomfiture. There were some twenty prisoners, besides—among them the Comanche chief, Red Lightning, who had been badly wounded in the charge the night before—and the colonel wished to examine them.

He sent for Red Lightning, and the chief was brought up on a stretcher. He had been shot through the lungs, not far from the heart, and had not long to live; yet his

eye was as bright and clear, his face as calm and impassive, as if he was free from pain. His voice, too, though low and husky, was perfectly steady, and he answered the officer's questions like one not afraid to die. The colonel had been long enough on the plains to talk all the Indian dialects.

A TERRIBLE REVENGE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

When a man who is a mortal, no matter how strong, Gets reckless, and thoughtlessly does me a wrong, Far better for him had he died when a child, For I wreak on him vengeance most fearful and wild.

Not on the spot with a crowd standing by, With the chances of losing a nose or an eye, Or have my egg cracked for a very trifling, And go round with a wretched man in the sling;

But I lie on my bed when the evening is dim, And picture most horrible torments to him, (In fancy) I kick him the length of the street, Or eat him all up into little mince-meat;

Or I roast him an hour on a very hot fire; And oh! how his moanings and shrieks I admire! Then I beat him until he's in need of repairs, And tumble him down six or eight pairs of stairs;

For two or three nights this course I pursue, Till I think the poor fellow has got his full due, Except when the injury done me is stronger, And then I continue a night or two longer.

In this way I get satisfaction complete, And there never was any revenge half so sweet; Besides, it is cheap, and then it is plain That fellow will never insult you again.

Jed Coffin's Revenge.

A TRUE STORY OF 1812.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

II.

THE year passed on, and then the next, and no news of the Reprisal came to old Joe Macy. The old man was not so fortunate these two years as he had been in the past. He seemed to be bitten with the privateering mania, and embarked a good deal of money in vessels. And the worst of it was, he never came back.

The British raised the blockade of Boston, and only left the Shannon to watch the place, and one of Joe Macy's brigs must needs try a pair of heels with the Shannon out, but we had to leave her in the boats two days after. And the last we saw of the Reprisal she went down head foremost in five hundred fathoms of water.

There was a short silence, when Marion inquired, in a low tone:

"And did you save much?"

Jed Coffin tilted back his chair, and looked up, with a quizzical grin, at the ceiling.

"Wal, I reckon we saved our prize money rather, and yer father's share's about a hundred thousand dollars. We warn't sick fools as to leave that behind in calm weather."

Now, Joe Macy's fortune was not such a great one for these days, though they called him a rich man in 1814, and the loss of two handsome brigs, known to be gone, with the total disappearance of the most expensive venture of the three, the Reprisal, cut down the poor man's fortune from fifty thousand dollars to just nothing at last.

And then he had a disappointment about Marion and young Gerry. Spite of his efforts, the girl wouldn't cotton to New York's youthful blood; and the young man, who, to do him justice, was very much in love with Marion, turned huffy at last at her repeated snubbings, and left Boston for his native place, where he married the beautiful Miss Bibby, who hadn't a rap to her name.

And when old Joe Macy scolded his daughter for her having let the elegant Gerry depart, she only tossed her head, and replied:

"Let him go, father. You remember what I told you, when you insulted poor Captain Coffin for no harm but amusing a girl. If the Reprisal never comes back, I'll die an old maid."

"Why, good heavens, girl! are you mad? What can you see in that rough sailor to like; you, whom I've brought up like a lady, with advantages I never had—hey?"

"I see a man of my father's class," she answered, with spirit; "who won't think he's honoring me too highly by wedding me, as your fine New York gentleman showed me. And, besides that, I see a man whom you were not ashamed to send to danger to earn money for you, though you were ashamed to see him in your drawing-room, and insulted him for—nothing."

And here she swept out of the room with wonderful dignity, leaving the old captain to indulge in quarter-deck language, all to himself. For the fact was, Marion was a young lady of decided firmness, not to say obstinacy, and it was principally out of opposition that she maintained this tone with her father. Had he not been rude to his best captain, and accused her of being in love with the stalwart sailor, she might never have thought of the latter again. As it was, hearing him abused all the time, she made a deity out of the absent, just to show her independence. But the estrangement did not last long between father and child. When losses came, and poor Captain Macy found himself a beggar at seventy-eight, Marion seemed to pluck up new spirit under each blow. The house was sold at auction, and the Macys moved into a small dwelling, where the old captain might have starved but for his brave daughter.

Marion it was whose busy hands were at work from dawn till dark, and Marion it was who proved the prop and stay of her father's declining days.

The vessels were gone, and one of them had disappeared entirely.

The war went on, and ended in peace, and still no signs of the lost Reprisal. And still Marion comforted her father and told him that he would yet see his venture back with interest.

"For I know from Captain Coffin's face, papa, that he was never made to fail. You'll see him yet."

The old sailor shook his head mournfully and doubted, but, sure enough, one day, after peace had been proclaimed over six months, in walked long Jed Coffin one morning, as they sat at breakfast in their little cottage, and saluted them with:

"How du, Cap? How du, Miss Marion? I've been a pesky time a-comin', but I couldn't help it. The Reprisal's at the bottom of the sea, sir, but we saved our hides."

And then old Macy saw that his last hope of fortune was gone, and he rose from the table with trembling limbs and shook the other's hand, saying:

"Never mind, Jed. The boys were saved. You can tell her all about it. I'm going out, for I don't—feel—well."

And the old man left the room abruptly to hide his feelings.

Jed Coffin looked after him with a queer twinkle in his eye, and then remarked:

"I suppose I must as well sit down to tell it—hey, Miss?"

And Marion instantly answered: "Yes."

Then she rose up, and bustled about to wash up and put away the breakfast things, her heart very full of emotions. She had counted with a vague confidence on Coffin's return, but not as a disappointed, shipwrecked man; and she found it hard to give up the visions of returning comfort which had flushed up on his entrance. But she said nothing till all was cleared away.

Then she sat down on a little ottoman, covered with chintz, and made out of an old box, which was all the remainder of her old splendors left, took out her knitting, and demurely said:

"Now, Mr. Coffin, please tell me every thing."

And Jed Coffin complied. He was no longer awkward and bashful now. On the contrary, he took possession of three chairs, on which he tilted himself back in an attitude of luxurious ease, before he began his story.

"It's a mighty hard thing they tell me, Miss Marion, to come down to livin' in one room, when ye've had twenty. But it's just as hard to lose a vessel ye love, when she's behaved like a reg'lar snoozier. That 're Reprisal was just the sweetest little craft ever a fell' trod, and she could walk away from 'er frigate in King George's navy like a witch. We ran down to the West Indies, and just played old Cain with their traders, the first summer, taking prize after prize, till a hull fleet came arter us and chased us out. Then we ran down to the Horn, and went into the Pacific, beat up the whalers, and got chased out by two British frigates, the time they took the Essex. But that warn't the last of the little clipper. We went across toward China and India, and tub tu Injamen than afore we heard that peace war a-goin' to be concluded. And so then we pulled foot for old Borsting once more, and would 'a' got in here all safe if it hadn't been for gettin' caught in a tornado off St. Kitts. That there storm strafed the little barky so that she leaked a stream. We rode the storm out, but we had to leave her in the boats two days arter. And the last we saw of the Reprisal she went down head foremost in five hundred fathoms of water."

There was a short silence, when Marion inquired, in a low tone:

"And did you save much?"

Jed Coffin tilted back his chair, and looked up, with a quizzical grin, at the ceiling.

"Wal, I reckon we saved our prize money rather, and yer father's share's about a hundred thousand dollars. We warn't sick fools as to leave that behind in calm weather."

Then Marion inquired, in a low tone:

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